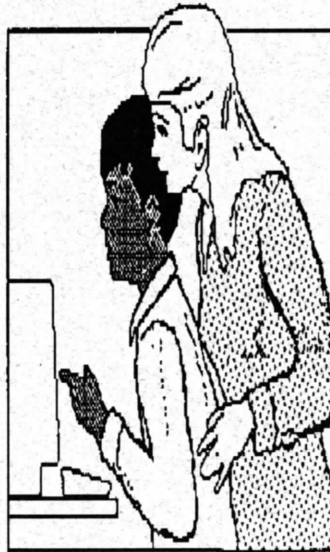


## Enhancing Competencies of Supported Employment Specialists: Development of a Video -Assisted Training Program

Bob Morgan, Rae Feng, and Chuck Salzberg

**F**or adults with severe disabilities to become highly valued employees of community businesses or industries, they need quality training and ongoing support services. Supported employment has become a major component of services provided by vocational rehabilitation programs for adults with severe disabilities (Melia, 1990). The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 1984 (P. L. 98-527) and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1986 (P. L. 99-506) define supported employment as *paid employment in integrated work settings for persons with developmental disabilities who are likely to need ongoing support, meaning, continuous or periodic skill training or other forms of assistance* (Section 103). Assistance and supervision is provided by supported employment specialists.

Supported employment specialists may include either "job coaches" or "co-worker trainers." Job *coaches* usually work for vocational rehabilitation programs, providing training and supervision to employees with disabilities on the job site. Nationwide, there is a current shortage of qualified job coaches (Morgan, 1990; Powell, Pancsofar, Steere, Butterworth, Itkowitz, & Rainforth, 1991). In fact, some authors (Kregel & Sale, 1988; Morgan, 1990) suggest that the paucity of job coaches is the most urgent problem facing the successful implementation of supported employment. *Co-worker trainers* receive instruction from their supervisors or vocational



rehabilitation personnel. Once trained, co-worker trainers create a "natural support system" by assisting the employee(s) with disabilities (Nisbet, 1992). Using co-workers creates an internal system for training, support and advocacy; ensures a more consistent and dependable source of assistance; and establishes the employee as an integral member of the work organization (Rusch, Wilson, Hughes, & Heal, in press). However, like job coaches employed by external agencies, co-workers need training in how best to assist employees with disabilities.

A supported employment specialist must possess a variety of sophisticated skills, such as conducting job analysis and assessment, providing training to supported employees in the workplace, retraining on new job

assignments, and intervening when problems arise (Powell et al., 1991). Specialists may also work with residential, rehabilitation, social service, transportation, and other service providers (Buckley, Mank, & Sandow, 1990). Clearly, in order to perform competently, supported employment specialists must receive comprehensive, effective, and efficient training.

Yet some rehabilitation programs, faced with limited budgets and time constraints, are severely compromised in their ability to deliver the necessary training. Even programs that can arrange training face turnover rates as high as 47% among their specialists (Winking, Trach, Rusch, & Tines, 1989). These programs need an inexpensive, easy-to-use program that focuses on training critical skills required of supported employment specialists. Also, they need an adaptable, flexible program that provides instruction to co-workers who, in turn, deliver their own training.

Fortunately, many training programs are available to fill this need (Griffin & Revell, 1991; Inge, Barcus, Brooke, & Everson, 1991; Pickett, Faison, Formanek, & Woods, 1993; Utah Supported Employment Program, 1991). For example, the Utah Supported Employment Program (1991) has developed comprehensive training covering numerous topics related to administration, marketing, job development, assessment, job training, regulations, transition from

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## CPD Honors Outstanding Staff and Programs

A reception on November 11th honored Center for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) staff and programs who have received special recognition. The Bear River Adult Skill Center (BRASC), directed by Margo Stevens, was awarded the Golden Key Award as the Service Provider of the year by the Utah Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and the Maurice Warshaw Foundation. Dr. Phyllis Cole, co-administrator of the Clinical Services at CPD, received the 1993 Human Services Honorary Life Member Award by the Utah Department of Human Services. The Utah Assistive Technology Program, directed by Martell Menlove, was cited by the Mountain Plains Information Exchange Program for a regional recognition award for outstanding services in rehabilitation technology. The Kaleidoscope concert fund-raising for the Family Intervention Program (FIP), spearheaded by Jill Hoffman, earned plaudits and expressions of gratitude for those who worked to make the concert a success.

BRASC was organized in 1979 as a model program of the Center for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) at Utah State



Left to Right: Jill Hoffman, Martell Menlove, Phyllis Cole, Margo Stevens

University. The program's mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to become independent and productive members of the community. BRASC offers a wide array of services to individuals with identified disabilities. These include training in daily living skills; community access; pre-vocational, vocational, and job preparation training; job coaching; and job-site follow-up services. BRASC is also involved with the Supported Employment Project for Individuals Sustaining Traumatic Brain Injuries or, the SEBI Project. Their goal is to assist individuals who sustained traumatic brain injury successfully re-integrate into the community. In addition, BRASC serves as a host facility for practicum students in special education and rehabilitation and as a research site for studies on individuals with disabilities.

Dr. Cole's award was presented by the Utah Department of Human Services, in conjunction with Utah Issues. Dr. Cole and another recipient were selected for their outstanding contributions and commitment to the human service arena. They were honored at the annual Utah Issues Conference in Salt Lake City last October. Dr. Cole is co-administrator of Clinical Services. Clinical

Services provides assessment services to children and youth in the Intermountain Region. She also supervises the Family Intervention Program which serves approximately 90 young children with disabilities and their families. She is a member of the ethics committee of a local nursing home and The People Place, a community toy lending program. She has dedicated 20 years of service to helping children and youth with disabilities.

Kaleidoscope was one of the many fund-raising benefits that the staff and families of FIP conducted to help maintain the program. Kaleidoscope was a concert that featured renowned local and visiting artists who donated their services. The FIP program is housed in the CPD and serves young children, birth to three years, with, or at risk for, disabilities.

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The Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP) was cited by the Mountain Plains Information Exchange as an outstanding model program in rehabilitation technology services. The selection committee for the regional recognition award noted that the most impressive facet of the

UATP is their active involvement with the state legislature. UATP was established to assist individuals of all ages with disabilities and their families by increasing the availability, utilization, and maintenance of assistive technology devices, such as power wheelchairs,

communication boards, and computer adaptations. In addition, UATP serves as a resource center for information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through a computer database on different assistive devices as well as books, packets, and video materials.

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The Access Utah Network, an information and referral (I & R) system for persons with disabilities, is now located at UCAT. Page Petrucka and other I & R operators respond to questions, provide accurate and up-to-date information, and put callers in touch with disability-related services in Utah. They have extensive information on topics such as assistive technology devices and services, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and specific information on where to obtain services.

UCAT has a large display of assistive devices, and staff members are available to do demonstrations and consultations. The Computer Center for Citizens with Disabilities, Craig Boogaard Executive Director, is incorporated into UCAT and has an extensive display of the latest computer technology including alternate input and output devices as well as software for persons with disabilities. As the demonstration unit develops and acquires more devices, a device

loan program will be implemented. The acquisition of technology is often frustrated by the lack of available funding. The UCAT funding specialist, Tom Jackson, assists in identifying appropriate and accessible funding sources. He has information on agency funding, Medicare and Medicaid funding sources, third party payers, low interest loans, and other options to acquire the technology needed.

As UCAT progresses, services in areas of design, fabrication, customizations and repair of technology will be available. Bryan Carroll, the AT technician, is available to assist in these areas. Individuals needing customized equipment and devices are invited to visit the center. UCAT staff in addition to those already mentioned, include Daryl McCarty, director, and Sally Coon, secretary/receptionist.

UCAT is available to individuals who need want to see what is available, try new equipment, gather information, have questions answered, and become better informed about

assistive technology. It is also a resource to providers of technology as a demonstration site for new equipment. The center is available to service providers for other uses, such as a site for assessments.

Future plans for the Utah Center for Assistive Technology include expansion as an interagency/interdisciplinary assessment center for assistive technology and as a Local Focus Operation for the National Cristina Foundation (NCF). NCF fosters and shares effective applications of commercially obsolete computer technology to help people with disabilities, students at risk and the disadvantaged lead more productive lives.

**UCAT is located at 2056 South 1100 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84105.**

**Access Utah Network (1-800-333-8824), a toll free service, is now located there.**



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school to work, and interagency cooperation. This training program is used throughout Utah, and is a component of the Basic Employment Specialist Training program delivered by Salt Lake Community College.

The Supported Employment Specialist Training project, based on a grant awarded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, is developing a video-assisted training program for supported employment specialists. The objective of the program is to enhance competencies of employment specialists as demonstrated during on-site evaluations as they train employees with disabilities and perform other functions. The program will integrate print-based training

materials with an array of interactive, motion video examples and simulation exercises.

Recently, investigators have examined the efficacy of using video to assist in training teachers, preservice teachers, and paraprofessionals (e. g., Morgan & Gibb, 1993; Salzberg, Rule, Chen, Fodor-Davis, Morgan, & Schulze, 1989). For example, Morgan and Gibb (1993) presented findings from evaluation of a videodisc-assisted program with paraprofessionals who implemented instructional procedures in their classrooms under their teachers' supervision. Paraprofessionals viewed classroom scenes on video illustrating instructional procedures. Then, they participated in video-referenced exercises on ways to deliver instruction. Subsequently, they developed and implemented instructional procedures in their

own classrooms. Results indicated that the video-assisted materials provided paraprofessionals with skills allowing them to deliver instruction more effectively with students in their classrooms. Salzberg and colleagues (1989) analyzed videodisc-assisted courseware for preservice teacher trainees. Results indicated that the courseware was effective and was overwhelmingly preferred by trainees over traditional academic instruction.

The supported employment specialist training program will include (a) print manuals, (b) video demonstrations of job training situations, and (c) print- and video-based assessment of performance. Video will be formatted for both 1/2-inch VHS videotape and Level 1 videodisc. Under direction of local training facilitators, supported employment specialists may work in small groups by reading materials, viewing the videotape or videodisc, and responding to print- and video-based questions and exercises. After successfully completing these training requirements, specialists will participate in performance-based evaluations of required competencies on the job site. When some specialists attain competency in all program areas, they may participate as training facilitators for new specialists. The program may be used by either vocational rehabilitation programs, businesses, or industries. The program may also serve as a part of a community college or technical school program for job coaches who are employed by a rehabilitation facility or co-workers of employees with disabilities.

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Currently, project staff are identifying critical skills needed by supported employment specialists through literature review, consultation with advisory personnel experienced in supported employment, and survey research. Advisory personnel include supported employment program directors, job coaches, employers, co-workers, employees with disabilities, and university scholars.

A prototype program will be developed starting in early 1994. Videotaping will take place at actual job sites and will depict common jobs in representative community locations. Actors who portray employees will include youth and adults with disabilities.

A series of field-based program evaluations will begin in the spring of 1994. Supported employment specialists who participate in training will also serve as program developers, providing feedback to the project staff about specific materials and recommending refinements. Evaluations will first be conducted in local programs and job sites. Thereafter, the revised program will be evaluated by targeted programs in Connecticut, Tennessee, and Montana.

We anticipate that approximately 100-120 supported employment specialists will receive training while evaluating this program. Following development and evaluation, the program will be disseminated nationwide. It is our hope that, through the use of this program, supported employment specialists can learn critical skills to become competent trainers of employees with disabilities.

## Paucity of job coaches is the most urgent problem facing the successful implementation of supported employment.

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For more information on the Supported Employment Specialist Training Program, contact Bob Morgan at (801) 750-3251

Unlike programs based exclusively on print material or dependent on live demonstrations, this video-assisted program will:

- ♦ efficiently present various jobs and supported employees in the context of actual work settings,
- ♦ allow specialists to view training material repeatedly,
- ♦ promote problem-solving and decision-making by placing the specialist in simulated work situations,
- ♦ present realistic, community-based work circumstances likely to be encountered,
- ♦ allow specialists to discriminate between correct and incorrect training procedures, or between effective and ineffective communication strategies, and
- ♦ allow training to be delivered repeatedly, consistently, and efficiently.